

**Security Council**

Fifty-second Year

3767th Meeting

Wednesday, 16 April 1997, 11.30 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Brolley
	Egypt	Mr. Aboul-Magd
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Matuszewski
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III)
(S/1997/304)



The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Peru, Qatar, South Africa, Uruguay and Zimbabwe, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Aouad (Argentina), Mr. Amorim (Brazil), Mr. Mpay (Cameroon), Mr. Mangoela (Lesotho), Mr. Chimimba (Malawi), Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Biegman (Netherlands), Mr. Guillén (Peru), Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Mr. Jeje (South Africa), Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) and Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), document S/1997/304. Members of the Council also have before them document S/1997/316, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

The first speaker is the representative of Angola, on whom I now call.

Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola): I would like to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on behalf of the Government of Angola, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. Your diplomatic skills are a guarantee that you will ably guide the work of this body. I also congratulate the outgoing President, His Excellency Ambassador Zbigniew Wlosowicz, for the excellent work he performed during his mandate last month.

I would like also to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for peace in Angola. His recent visit was a testimony of his commitment to the rapid settlement of the Angolan conflict, and contributed a great deal to speeding up the peace process.

We acknowledge as well the performance of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye, and that of the member countries of the troika of observers of the Angolan peace process: Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States.

Just a few days ago, this Council and the international community witnessed an important turning point in the history of Angola: the inauguration of the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, and the return of UNITA members to Parliament finally occurred, allowing for the first time the beginnings of the normal operation of the democratic institutions that were put in place after the general elections of 1992.

On behalf of the people and the Government of Angola, we would like to reiterate our thanks for the presence and solidarity of the Heads of State or Government of Portugal, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, Mali, Gabon, Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Namibia, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau; the Vice-President of Ghana; the Prime Minister of Mozambique; the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and representatives of the European Union and other Governments for being at the swearing-in ceremony of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

These two important events can be viewed as an indicator of the political stability in our country, and of the fact that the Angolans, who in the past fought one another with weapons because of their political

differences, now find themselves on the same side, fighting for the higher interests of their country and of the whole Angolan people.

We acknowledge that the inauguration of the Government and the Parliament took place at a time when there are important tasks still to be accomplished, but as Prime Minister França Van Dunem stated,

"we wanted to instill more confidence in the peace process with that gesture".

The premises are thus established for us to attain our main objective, which is the establishment of the true rule of law, under which the individual and collective rights of all citizens will be respected and protected by law, and under which the political differences and the different parties can find in the Parliament an appropriate forum for discussions and review.

The actual beginning of the mandate of the new Government and the new Parliament, an event cheered by our people, by the national political forces and by the international community, is one of a series of significant steps already concluded under the peace process for Angola. That makes us assert that war is becoming a matter of the past, while peace and stability are a day-to-day reality.

The road that took us to that goal was a long and difficult one. It demanded tremendous dedication, numerous sacrifices and a high spirit of flexibility. The relative peace that Angola has experienced for approximately three years is the fruit of that effort, and it constitutes the most precious thing that the people are enjoying after two decades of violence and destruction.

It is also important, however, to underscore that the inauguration of the new Government and the establishment of the new Parliament do not mean that the peace process in Angola has entirely reached its objectives, and certainly do not signal its end.

There is still a lot to be done before we achieve effective peace and stability country-wide. The priorities are the extension of State administration throughout the country; which will ensure free movement of people and goods; the return of refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin; and the re-establishment of normal social and economic activity in those areas.

The conclusion of the formation of the Angolan Armed Forces and the social reintegration of former combatants is another fundamental issue to be tackled during this current stage. We are confident that these and other clauses of the Lusaka Protocol will be implemented very shortly.

Angola is now entering a new era of its history, one that will bring an end to the almost three decades of war that have ravaged the country. The burden caused by the war is very heavy, and given the current economic and financial situation, the Angolan Government alone will not be able to mitigate its negative impact. We therefore appeal to the international community to continue to render its valuable support.

In this context, the Angolan Government recalls that it is time to speed up implementation of the programme of community rehabilitation and national reconciliation, adopted during the Brussels Round Table Conference, where the international community pledged almost \$1 billion for the programme.

In the same vein, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for launching a consolidated inter-agency appeal in the amount of \$228.4 million, whose goal is to meet the most pressing humanitarian needs of the Angolan population.

The draft resolution before the Council today contains important requirements for the completion of the Angolan peace process. The pertinent recommendations in paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's report (S/1997/304), regarding the phased and gradual withdrawal of the contingent of UNAVEM III, as well as those in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, are proof of the sincerity and responsibility with which the Angolan peace process has proceeded. The vigilance therein reflects the situation on the ground, which leads us to advance step by step towards the consolidation of the peace process to which the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular have contributed, for the sake of peace in southern Africa and in the world.

The future of Angola is now in the hands of Angolans, and we believe we will be able to demonstrate that all the statements made on 9 and 11 April 1997 were not just empty words. The courage, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice with which we have always faced adversity in the past will now enable us to move ahead towards a new Angola and will bear the fruits of peace and prosperity for all Angolans.

What I am going to say now is equally important. Angola, which is in southern Africa, fought a bloody war against South Africa for several years after its war of independence from colonialism. After apartheid, Angola entered its civil war, and today Angola is already experiencing a trend of peace. This is very important because Angola can now join the whole of southern Africa in an atmosphere of peace, stability and development.

We would like to thank, in this regard, all the Governments, United Nations humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations for their generosity towards the population affected by the war and to pay tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives in the service of peace in Angola.

Finally, we would like to stress that it is no longer the time, in this Council, to use language such as "both sides" or "both parties", as we did before, because today we have already sworn in a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution before the Security Council, which reflects this idea, must be clarified, naming those who are to blame and not left as it is to give its current confusing idea.

The President: I thank the representative of Angola for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation is profoundly gratified at the fact that Angola is moving step by step towards a new, peaceful stage in its national life. A considerable political, material and financial contribution to promoting national reconciliation in that country was and continues to be made by the international community.

Just two weeks ago it appeared that the peace process, encountering new difficulties, had once again been stalemated. However, the firm position of the international community, the resolutions of the Security Council, the visit of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Angola and the intensive work carried out by his Special Representative made it possible to get things moving again.

After lengthy and completely unwarranted procrastination, UNITA finally did what was expected of it under the Lusaka Protocol. As a result, important and positive changes took place. The question of the status of Mr. Savimbi was resolved, the deputies from UNITA were sworn into the National Assembly and, most importantly, the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was formed. Thus, a new political basis has been provided for

the dialogue between the Government and UNITA, and the peace process has ascended to a new level. We hope that this will help the parties in Angola rise above any possible recurrence of their past mistrust and to make further progress towards durable peace in that country.

At the same time, we cannot fail to be concerned about the situation relating to completing the implementation of the political and particularly the military aspects of the Lusaka Protocol. Although there has been a certain amount of movement, the incorporation of selected troops into the Angolan Armed Forces and the National Police is going quite slowly. Instances of desertion among former UNITA soldiers number in the hundreds, and the checkpoints are only slowly being dismantled.

The failure to resolve military issues might in the future serve as a source of new difficulties and destabilization. It is precisely for that reason that we attach particular importance to the appeal contained in the draft resolution before the Council to fulfil the remaining aspects of the peace process precisely and promptly. We believe that promoting their implementation will continue to be the most important part of the mandate of UNAVEM III. As military and political questions are tackled, and as the military contingent of the Verification Mission is withdrawn, it will be possible to undertake transitional measures in order to ensure a further United Nations presence in Angola beyond 30 June 1997.

We would like to pay tribute to the people of Angola for their patience and persistence and their resolve to achieve peace and concord in their land. We appreciate that in order to consolidate the process of national reconciliation, further international assistance will be required. On the whole, we can support the proposals of the Secretary-General in this regard, and we will be prepared, in the context of the competencies of the Security Council, to consider any specific recommendations he may present later.

As a member of the troika of observer countries monitoring the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, the Russian Federation will continue its efforts, both multilaterally and bilaterally with all interested parties, to bring the process of national reconciliation to a successful conclusion, and to restore stability in Angola.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to offer a warm welcome to the Ambassador of Angola and other members of the Permanent Mission of Angola.

The Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which the Angolan people and the international community have longed to see, has finally been established. This is yet another important milestone in the Angolan peace process. China rejoices heartily at this development and wishes to extend its warm congratulations to the Angolan people and both parties in Angola. We appreciate and welcome the political sincerity and positive attitude the parties concerned have demonstrated towards peace in Angola, in conformity with the popular will.

China has stated on many occasions that the settlement of the question of Angola ultimately rests with the Angolan people themselves. We feel gratified that the two parties in Angola have, through their efforts, achieved another major goal set by the Lusaka Protocol. We hope that the two parties will continue to accomplish other tasks in the peace process so that the Angolan people will again be able to enjoy peace and tranquillity and the country will be able to embark on the road of rehabilitation and development at an early date.

China has consistently held that the international community has the responsibility to promote the Angolan peace process and help bring peace to Angola. At this final critical juncture of the peace process, it is still necessary for the international community, including the United Nations, to give further support. On the basis of this consideration, the Chinese delegation supports the extension of the mandate of United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) to 30 June 1997 and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

At the same time, we support further adjustments to UNAVEM III in the light of the gradual development of the situation in Angola and sincerely hope that the two parties in Angola will continue to cooperate with UNAVEM III to fully implement the Lusaka Protocol with a view to bringing peace to Angola.

An Angola of reconciliation is finally presented to the world 30 months after the signing of the Lusaka Protocol. This is another example of African countries, following Sierra Leone and Liberia, successfully resolving conflicts and achieving national reconciliation through political negotiations. We feel truly delighted that all of southern Africa has become a land of peace and harmony, that hot

spots have been removed one after another from the African continent and that more and more African countries are moving towards peace and development. We would like to take this opportunity to extend our warm congratulations and pay high tribute to the African people.

A new page has now been turned in the history of Angola and a new era of economic recovery and national reconstruction has arrived. After many years of war, Angola has to tackle mountains of tasks in every field. The Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is faced with the dual mission of consolidating peace and reviving the economy. The road is long, and the task is arduous. The international community, including the United Nations, should assist Angola in every possible way to achieve rapid rehabilitation and development. This is also the fundamental guarantee for lasting peace in Angola. The Chinese Government and people are ready to make their contribution to this end.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The Government of Japan heartily welcomes the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola. Signifying as it does the introduction of a multi-party democracy, the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation demonstrates that Angola is falling into step with the ongoing democratization process that we have been witnessing in many parts of Africa, and that achievement is thus all the more welcome.

It is hoped that the parties concerned duly appreciate the unflagging commitment and close involvement of the international community in the peace process, especially in its deployment of three United Nations Missions, starting with the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) and continuing up to the present with UNAVEM III. The parties thus owe it to the international community, as well as to the people of Angola, to strive in good faith to solidify the progress that has been made so far and to reaffirm their commitment to nation-building. If they are to be able to carry out the difficult tasks that lie ahead, including the normalization of the State administration throughout the national territory and the integration of UNITA forces into the Angolan Armed Forces and the National Police, they will need to develop relations of mutual trust. As a first step in that process, my delegation earnestly hopes that President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi will find it possible to meet in Angola in the near future to consolidate the basis for genuine national reconciliation.

Under these circumstances, I wish to state that my delegation is in favour of the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997, as prescribed in the draft resolution before us.

There is general support for a continued United Nations presence after UNAVEM III has completed its tasks. In its intervention on 27 February, my delegation confirmed the readiness of the Government of Japan to contribute to the follow-on Mission, the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, once the details regarding its mandate, modalities, and time-frame are worked out. Now that the impasse in the political situation has been overcome, Japan is ready to consider how it might best contribute to that effort on the basis of the further recommendations of the Secretary-General and in accordance with actions taken by the Security Council.

Moreover, my Government is ready to assist Angola in its endeavour to reach true peace and national reconciliation. The consolidated appeal that was issued on 24 March contains humanitarian projects, as well as those aimed at consolidating the peace, and Japan is studying the appeal closely in order to determine how it might most appropriately contribute to it.

When the peace process is firmly on track and it is time to convene an international conference to consider the most effective ways and means of assisting Angola in developing its great potential in terms of both natural resources and human resources and in rebuilding its economy, Japan will be ready to participate actively in that conference.

In closing, I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye, for their tireless efforts in support of the peace process in Angola. In order to ensure that those efforts are as fruitful as possible, we hope that all concerned will cooperate towards the consolidation of reconciliation throughout the country so that the process of nation-building can get under way. The people of Angola will then have reason to believe that a truly peaceful and prosperous future awaits them.

Mr. Choi (Republic of Korea): Five days ago, on 11 April 1997, the people of Angola put behind them two decades of tragic civil war and ushered in a new era of peace and concord. More than anything else, the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is a historic triumph for the Angolan people. It is a triumph of their long-standing aspirations for peace

over the lingering forces of hatred and antagonism. The Republic of Korea extends its warmest congratulations to the people and the leaders of Angola on their achievement. We wish the very best for the people of Angola and for the new Government as it moves forward on the road to healing the scars of war and rebuilding the nation. The Republic of Korea will do its best within its capabilities to assist the Angolan Government in the daunting task ahead.

The inauguration of the unified Government in Angola is also a triumph for the international community, and for the United Nations in particular, which has invested a significant amount of its scarce resources in the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation in the world. Truly, Angola will go down as another instructive model of success in the annals of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We commend the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maitre Beye, as well as all the men and women of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) for their dedication and sacrifice.

We also pay tribute to the troika of observer countries, Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States, for the vital role they have been playing in facilitating the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. The Republic of Korea is proud of having taken part in the peace effort through its contribution of an engineering unit to UNAVEM III.

As we welcome the dawn of a promising new stage in the long and arduous peace process in Angola, we must not forget that there are still unfinished political and military tasks. We trust that the commitment of the Angolan people and their leaders to peace and reconciliation is strong enough to overcome the last few remaining obstacles in the peace process. We therefore look forward to speedy progress in the normalization of State administration throughout the country, the completion of the formation of the unified armed forces and the national police and the demobilization of ex-combatants. We believe that the continued presence of the United Nations in Angola is necessary until the hard-won peace takes firm root through the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. For this reason, we will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

As President Dos Santos stated in his inaugural address, the future of Angola now lies in the hands of the Angolan people. There is a time for all things, and now

is the time for peace, the time for concord in Angola. We sincerely hope that the energies and resources of the Angolan people, which were once squandered on the battlefield, will from now on be devoted to the reconstruction of their war-torn country. In the same vein, we look forward to seeing the Angolan leaders devote their energies and wisdom to winning the new battle to build a new country from the ashes of war, make it more prosperous, and ensure that the people enjoy the dividends of peace. This is a new test facing Angola's leaders, and history will judge them on how well they fare at this test.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): We welcome the inauguration on 11 April of the Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. This was a major step forward for the people of Angola. We would like to congratulate them on their determination to complete this essential stage of the peace process.

We would like also to pay tribute to the work of Special Representative Maitre Beye and to the Secretary-General, whose visit in March did much to help convince the parties of the Security Council's resolve on this issue. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that Angola is closer than ever before to a final settlement. The key now is to ensure that this forward momentum is maintained. Delays have characterized the Angolan peace process for far too long. Let us hope that they are now consigned to the history books.

The new Government deserves our full support. These initial weeks and months are likely to be testing. Former adversaries have to learn to work together. A new team must get to grips with the responsibilities of government. UNITA has made the right decision in joining the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. We trust they will now play a full and constructive part at all levels of the new Government and in the wider process of national reconciliation. We continue to believe that a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi would be a welcome and visible signal of both leaders' commitment to making the new Government work for the benefit of all Angolans.

In the immediate future, there are important political and military tasks which must be completed. They are spelled out in the Secretary-General's report (S/1997/304). We agree that programmes to incorporate UNITA personnel into the Angolan army and the national police or to demobilize them should be accelerated. Getting State administration in place throughout the country is also a priority, and it is also important that the people of Angola

can move around their country freely and that the exchange of goods is not impeded. We hope that rapid progress will be made on all of these outstanding issues and that they are not allowed to become new obstacles to the peace process.

One obstacle to further progress on the free movement of people and goods in Angola is the enormous number of mines which have been laid during the conflict. We hope that the reported delays in the mine-clearance programme will be resolved soon. In the meantime, we agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation that, as an interim measure, the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) should continue to provide operational support to the mine-clearance programme, on a cost-reimbursable basis from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, until the end of June.

The Secretary-General refers to reports of Angolan involvement in the conflict in Zaire. We share his serious concern at these reports. The people of Angola know all too well the price of armed conflict. They must refrain from any action which would exacerbate conflict in Zaire.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the international community must remain engaged in Angola until the goal of full implementation of the peace agreements is reached. We support his recommendation to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III to 30 June 1997, and to deploy a United Nations observer mission in Angola thereafter. It is essential that the mandate of the observer mission is strong enough to enable it to be effective. We attach particular importance to the human rights element of it and to the mission having powers to investigate alleged abuses, as well as to the civilian police and public information programmes.

Finally, to those who would question the value of the United Nations and the resources devoted to it, the work of UNAVEM III, the largest current United Nations peacekeeping operation, is a reminder of the critical role which the United Nations can and does play in bringing conflicts to a peaceful resolution. But to be able to continue to do this effectively we need both the resources and the ability to take timely decisions which will be followed by prompt action when required.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's full support for the statement to be made at a later stage of this debate by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

The Security Council is holding today its third meeting in the last two months to consider the question of Angola. This fact reflects not only the importance of the situation in that country, but also the commitment of the international community with regard to the peace process in Angola.

Recent developments, namely the adoption of legislation concerning a special status for the leader of UNITA, the incorporation of UNITA deputies into Parliament and, finally, the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, are significant steps towards peace and national reconciliation in Angola. We wish to congratulate the people of Angola, the parties concerned and their leaders for these crucial achievements.

However, many important tasks remain unfulfilled. We believe that, with the new Government of Angola enjoying the support of all political parties, the time has come to make an additional effort to finalize the work. Prompt normalization of State administration, completion of the formation of a unified armed forces and a national police, as well as a conclusion of the process of demobilization of uncommissioned UNITA military personnel, should figure prominently on the agenda of the new Angolan authorities. The same is true of the steps to be taken with regard to the economic and social rehabilitation of the country, especially those relating to the humanitarian situation and demining programmes. Speaking of the acute problem of mines, we feel obliged to express our concern at the slow pace of demining.

My delegation believes that the new Government of Angola, as well as the parties that constitute it, will show enough resolve to overcome the difficulties which may be encountered on the way to peace and security in Angola.

We also hope that a long-awaited meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi will soon take place within Angolan territory giving impetus to a prompt resolution of all outstanding issues.

For many years the international community has been investing substantial resources, both human and material, in the settlement of the Angolan conflict. We believe that now, with the Government and people of that country just

about to take the final steps in their common quest for a peaceful future, this foreign assistance should not be ceased. With this in view, the Polish delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997 and will vote in favour of the draft resolution the Security Council is considering today. The extension of the UNAVEM III mandate for an additional 10 weeks would allow time for the consideration of the modalities of a future observer mission, as well as for the establishment of mechanisms and arrangements for a smooth transition from the current military operation in Angola into another form of United Nations presence.

While welcoming the achievements of recent days, we have to remember how complicated the Angolan road to peace was. Consequently, we do not think that the Security Council, or indeed the international community, can afford to neglect further developments in that country, which happens to be close to a region prone to social, economic, political and military crisis.

My delegation shares the Secretary-General's view that never before has Angola been so close to the final resolution of the conflict and to the attainment of lasting peace. The prosperous future of that country depends, as it always has, on the wisdom and political will of Angolan leaders and their people, as well as on their ability to peacefully resolve their problems and differences.

In conclusion, let me express on behalf of my delegation our highest appreciation to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative for Angola, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye, and the three observer States for their tireless efforts aimed at promoting peace in Angola.

We also pay tribute to all the men and women of UNAVEM III and of the previous United Nations operations in Angola for their courage and for the sacrifices they made for the peaceful future of that country.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): The French delegation will certainly support the draft resolution that will be put to the vote to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997. When resolution 1098 (1997) was adopted in February, our delegation expressed its concern about the delays affecting the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and

had to point out that it was UNITA which was essentially responsible for those delays. But since then, the evolution of the situation in Angola has been particularly encouraging and, as the Secretary-General points out for the first time, an end is about to be put to a devastating conflict. We are nearing a settlement, as indicated by the Secretary-General.

This is the favourable result of all the efforts made to help Angola, notably those of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye. Like previous speakers, we would like to express our great gratitude to them.

France welcomed the formation of the Angolan Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which was officially inaugurated in Luanda on 11 April 1997. This event marks a crucial stage in the process of peace and reconciliation begun in Lusaka in November 1994. The inauguration of this Government opens a new era in the history of a country bruised by more than 20 years of civil war.

In the past two years, France and its European Union partners have of course supported United Nations endeavours to ensure implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. Today, we wish to assure the new Angolan Government of the complete willingness of the French authorities actively to help the new Government in its task of reconstructing and developing a reconciled Angola.

While it is the new Government and the Angolan people that must define the future of their country, France is nonetheless convinced that the international community must remain in Angola to facilitate the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. It is in this spirit that we welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the future of the United Nations presence in Angola with a view to supporting and to consolidating the process of national reconciliation, which will guarantee political stability and lasting development in that country.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): This debate is marked with particular distinction because it is taking place just a few days after important political events in Angola. In addition, by a fortunate combination of circumstances, our deliberations are taking place under the presidency of the representative of Portugal, a friendly country whose history is closely linked with that of Angola and of Guinea-Bissau, my own country. It is significant and gratifying that this is so.

The Angolan Government and UNITA finally proceeded to form a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April. This is assuredly a great victory for the Angolans, a victory whose political scope transcends the national frontiers of Angola, because it corresponds to the wish of the entire international community to see this country emerge from the vicious cycle of violence and devote itself to working for the well-being of all its citizens without distinction. The Angolans have many reasons to rejoice and to demonstrate their happiness, which many of us will be pleased to share.

Yes, the Angolan people believe that a new day has dawned, that a new point of departure has been reached, that a new hope has risen. We hope that nothing will frustrate or destroy this. The Angolan people wish to have confidence in their leaders and in their capacity to out-do themselves, to stand up to present challenges by concerting their efforts and working together, tirelessly, towards building their future — a future which, even yesterday, was uncertain and remote because it was obscured by so many years of confrontation, destruction and bereavement. The Angolans are convinced that it is possible that their nation can be reborn from the ashes of war.

Angolans are a courageous people who do not shrink from any ordeal, provided that they are assured that the road before them is the right one to follow, that the sacrifices of the present are worth making, and that destiny — their destiny — which they have placed in the hands of their political leaders, will be protected and defended with honour. That is why nothing should be done that would check this new surge of mutual recognition or stifle this bold spirit of good-neighbourliness, which will, it seems, from now on dwell in the hearts of the men and women of that country.

Every necessary step must be taken to respond to the cries of distress of the thousands of victims of an atrocious war that has continued for too long. Every corpse that lines the path of peace should serve as a beacon that lights the way for erstwhile enemies in their efforts to move towards national reconciliation. It is proper, therefore, to remember their sacrifices, heal their wounds and concern ourselves with their future. If peace in Angola is to be consolidated and to endure, it will require the contribution of all the vital forces of the nation, in a burst of national energy, to bring together in perfect synergy all the skill at the country's disposal.

A decisive phase has just been completed in Angola. We share the pride felt by all those who accompanied the Angolan people in their long quest for peace. I am thinking in particular of the Secretary-General of the United Nations who, as soon as he assumed office, took charge of the issue and succeeded, in particular as a result of his visits to Luanda and Bailundo last March, in promoting a salutary thaw in the situation, to which end his Special Representative, Maitre Blondin Beye, worked tirelessly. We will never be able to express how much we owe to the civilian and military personnel of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) for having so perfectly accomplished their mission. It is fitting to pay tribute here to the memory of those many among them who are, unfortunately, no longer with us and to whom this great victory should be dedicated. We should also like to thank the troika countries for their contribution.

The international community committed itself wholeheartedly to the search for a solution to the Angolan crisis. The United Nations undertook there the most important peacekeeping operation that it has carried out to date. A great deal of financial support was necessary to ensure that it proceeded smoothly. That demonstrates what a great responsibility we now bear for ensuring that everything continues as planned for the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. Much remains to be done, particular in completing the incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and training the National Police. It will also be essential to strengthen the links of solidarity between Angolans by ensuring that, throughout the national territory, there will be an effective and equitable State administration that is capable of imbuing every citizen with a sense of belonging to a single country.

The international community must help Angolans to learn to live together again and to trust, understand and help each other. Many psychological obstacles remain to be overcome. It should be remembered that we must promote a culture of peace and forgiveness in that country. How much destruction has been provoked by all those years of confrontation and combat? How many widows, orphans and people mutilated by exploding mines bear witness to the horrors of which men are capable? Do they not need a hand to be stretched out to them to help them to regain their proper place in society?

International assistance will therefore be necessary for a long time to come. That is why we endorse the analysis and the recommendations contained in the two most recent reports of the Secretary-General. He has proposed

initiatives and structures that my delegation believes are commensurate with the challenges of the present and take full account of the new realities to which the Angolan people will have to adapt in the future. We believe that extending the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 is essential in order to consolidate what has already been achieved and to ensure the completion of the objectives laid down in the Lusaka Protocol. We hope that the timetable established for the gradual withdrawal of the military component will be respected, without in any way damaging the peace process as a whole.

The proposal of the Secretary-General with regard to the establishment, on 1 July 1997, of a United Nations Observer Mission in Angola, is worthy of all our consideration, as it takes into account the need to maintain the political balance that has already been established and to create the necessary conditions for the Angolans themselves to take charge of their future. This Mission will also help the Angolans to perfect their new system of government, one of whose major responsibilities will be to guarantee to all citizens the full enjoyment of their civil and political rights. In this respect, therefore, the international community will have to continue to support the efforts of the United Nations in both the humanitarian and financial spheres.

We have said how much we welcome the progress achieved in the peace process in Angola. My country, Guinea-Bissau, has, at every stage of Angola's long march towards liberty and peace, continued to display solidarity with the Angolan people — a brotherly people to which we are linked by many affinities and historic ties. We hope that President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi, in their wisdom and great magnanimity, will respond to the appeal of their people who, together with the rest of the international community, are calling upon them to meet together in a spirit of give and take so that national reconciliation in Angola can be sealed once and for all.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The inauguration on 11 April 1997 of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola is undoubtedly an important positive development and is welcomed by Egypt. We should also like to welcome other recent political achievements in Angola. The most important of these are, perhaps, the arrival in Luanda of most of the UNITA deputies, and the fact that they have taken their seats in the National Assembly; and the enactment of a law on the special status of Mr. Savimbi and his role in political life in Angola. These are all

important achievements whose effects cannot be jeopardized by those negative elements that, for the most part, result from the feeling of insecurity and lack of trust after more than two decades of destructive civil war.

What has taken place in Angola is truly a triumph of the will for peace. It represents the hopes of the Angolan people for stability and security that will allow them to begin truly to exercise their national right to life and development. Those achievements would have been impossible without the sustained efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Maitre Blondin Beye, and the support of the three troika States for his endeavours. Furthermore, the presence of 13 Heads of State at the inauguration ceremony of the new Government provides the best evidence of the concern of the international community, particularly African States, for the establishment of peace in Angola and its economic development efforts.

My delegation must observe that these positive political developments have not been matched by similar progress in the military aspects of the Lusaka Protocol, which remain to be implemented. The most important of these are the disarming of civilians, to enable the Government to extend full authority throughout the entire State territory, and incorporation of selected UNITA soldiers into a unified armed forces. All these matters are pending. My delegation hopes that solutions to these urgent issues will be found in the near future. Perhaps arranging a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi soon would be a step towards a final settlement of these issues.

The delegation of Egypt fully supports the Secretary-General's recommendations, contained in his two most recent reports to the Council, on the future of the United Nations presence in Angola, particularly as they relate, first, to the creation of a new United Nations observer mission in Angola (UNOMA) on 1 July 1997 as the successor to UNAVEM III, which would monitor the completion by both parties of the implementation of remaining military commitments and support national reconciliation; and secondly, to maintaining the Special Representative in Luanda with the appropriate human-resources support.

We agree with the Secretary-General that Angola needs the aid of the international community today perhaps more than ever before. As we all know, the war has destroyed the State infrastructure, including education and health facilities. The war has also spawned some 10 million

landmines, one for each Angolan. In addition, there are more than a million displaced persons inside Angola's borders and about 300,000 refugees in neighbouring States. Briefly, these are the conditions of the next phase awaiting the Angolan Government, which require all available assistance and support from the international community and relevant United Nations bodies to realize the hopes and aspirations of the Angolan people for a better life. Egypt will withhold no possible help or support from the brotherly people of Angola.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt supports the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): My country is particularly pleased to participate in this historic debate on Angola, which comes at a turning point in the turbulent history of that country. The journey in the search for a lasting and durable peace in Angola has been a long and arduous one. The people of Angola have endured more than 25 years of devastating civil war. They have lived with the darkness of despair and sorrow. They have seen their loved ones die or be maimed and the promise of hope denied them for too long.

It is against this background that we celebrate with the Angolan people as they usher in a new era filled with the possibility of lasting peace, as witnessed by the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997.

Kenya's involvement in the peace process goes back to the period before Angola's independence. The leaders of the three Angolan liberation movements, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola and UNITA, chose Kenya as the venue for their peace talks under the chairmanship of the late founding father of our Republic, President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who helped broker the first peace accord after six days of crucial talks on 21 June 1975 in State House Nakuru.

Addressing the gathering after the signing ceremony, as the three leaders, Mr. Agostinho Neto, Mr. Holden Roberto and Mr. Jonas Savimbi, hugged each other and shook hands amidst wild cheers from Kenyan ministers and local and overseas journalists, President Kenyatta appealed to the Angolan leaders to unite at home in order to implement measures they had agreed upon to bring about peace, security and freedom in Angola. The three

leaders agreed, among other things, to stop fighting and to create a climate of political tolerance and national unity within the political and ideological diversity of Angola.

Following this agreement, they proceeded to the coastal city of Mombasa, where, with the late President, they planted a fig tree to symbolize hope and renewal — a prayer for peace. Sadly, the fruits of that happy ending did not see the light of day.

Just as the planting of the fig tree then symbolized hope, the formation of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation now represents the hope, faith and aspirations of the Angolan people for a durable peace in their country.

The important agreements reached between the parties, including the swearing in of UNITA deputies, mark in our view a crucial step towards the full realization of the Lusaka Protocol, and, indeed, a momentous milestone in the Angolan peace process. Kenya fervently hopes that the leaders of Angola will now give something back to their people, by moving decisively away from an era of confrontation and manoeuvring, into one of tolerance, compromise and brotherhood. We strongly encourage them to do so.

The achievements reached thus far could not have been possible without the collective, painstaking efforts and encouragement by many. We single out, and highly commend, the superb role played by the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Angola, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye. His diligence and persistence in the face of numerous odds and trying conditions, coupled with the unyielding efforts of the troika of Portugal, the Russian Federation and United States of America, the Organization of African Unity and all other actors, finally won the day.

Let me temper my cautious optimism by urging all interested parties not to relent in their efforts to ensure the complete resolution of the conflict. The same energy we expended in the search for peace should be exerted to ensure that this process becomes irreversible. We are on the last lap of a long race. Let us redouble our efforts and not lose sight of the finishing tape.

Notwithstanding these hard-won, commendable achievements, my delegation is aware that a lot more needs to be done. We hope that the prevailing spirit of reconciliation will accelerate the pace towards implementation of the remaining aspects of the peace process. The speedy incorporation of selected UNITA

soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police will soon be considered by the Joint Commission. We wish them success. We are concerned that the proposed rapid demobilization programme of excess UNITA personnel in the central and southern regions has not been quickly implemented, which has resulted in even more hardship for UNITA soldiers and their families.

The resumption of the exercise of disarming the civilian population should be carried out in tandem with this. The large number of absentees and deserters from the selection and demobilization centres continues to be of concern to us because of the potential for random flare-ups. The removal of all the illegal checkpoints maintained by both parties, taken together with the other measures, will help in the normalization and extension of State administration throughout the country. In this new spirit we believe that a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi in Angola will represent an important confidence-building measure towards further strengthening national reconciliation.

The progress that has been achieved is political. In our view, the more difficult journey, that of social and economic reconstruction, must now begin in earnest. The war that our sisterly country suffered resulted in great loss. The infrastructure of Angola is in tatters. Schools, hospitals, waterworks, roads, railways — the hardware of a civil society — need to be completely rebuilt.

It is for these reasons that we have to help Angola now. The peace that has been woven so delicately must be supported, and we encourage those in a position to do so to be generous. It is incumbent upon the international community to respond. My delegation believes that the post-conflict reconstruction of Angola is the last piece of the puzzle.

We are convinced that the United Nations should continue to play an active role in Angola. We concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation contained in document S/1997/304 of 14 April 1997 that the mandate of UNAVEM III be extended for a final period until 30 June 1997. We also agree that there is need for a follow-on arrangement, which would help consolidate the new peace and national reconciliation among the Angolan people. Accordingly, my delegation will support the draft resolution before us.

Finally, we wish the people of Angola all the best, and appeal to their leaders, as brothers from the same

continent, to give peace a chance. I echo the words of our founding father 25 years ago when he expressed confidence

"that Kenya and Angola will continue to cooperate and strengthen their fruitful relations for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the two countries".

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States commends and congratulates the former Government and UNITA for the recent events in Luanda, including the National Assembly's 8 April passage of a law establishing a special position of trust and honour for the leader of the largest opposition party, the 9 April seating of the UNITA members of Parliament, and, most important, the 11 April formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation. These events mark the passage of the highest hurdle of the peace process, the moment in which the parties reunite into one entity focused on the common goal of bringing a better life to all Angolans.

We all recognize that the formation of the unity Government is not an end in itself and alone does not guarantee the success of the peace process. There will be times in the future when the new partners in governance will disagree strongly on questions of policy and become discouraged with the process. Nonetheless, the formation of the unity Government is an essential step forward and represents a commitment to political pluralism and reconciliation. The parties must stay the course and work together to build on the foundation they established last week.

Of course, more needs to be done. Of highest priority is the rapid induction of selected former UNITA personnel into the armed forces and police, and the demobilization of the others. The unity Government will need these military and police units that include former UNITA personnel for the next difficult task, that is, the extension of State administration to all parts of the country. The parties must work closely together to ensure that the people in the areas not yet under Government control are given the legal protections and humane treatment afforded to other Angolan citizens.

A special responsibility falls upon the largest party, the MPLA, to ensure that UNITA is taken on as a true partner, that it is given meaningful roles to perform in the Government, and that it is provided with sufficient resources to carry them out. UNITA also bears a major responsibility in assuring the success of the unity

Government. We strongly encourage the president of UNITA, Mr. Savimbi, to take advantage of the special position now legally established for him by meeting frequently with President Dos Santos in Angola to share his views. We hope that Mr. Savimbi will meet with President Dos Santos at the earliest opportunity. We call upon all members of the unity Government to work cooperatively for effective and representative government.

The international community still has an important role to play in supporting the process of national reconciliation and reconstruction. Today we are renewing the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997. We are also signalling our intention to consider a follow-on observer mission to assist the parties to complete the remaining tasks of the peace process. Demobilization and resettlement, refugee assistance, demining, strengthening of democracy and governance, economic reform, and management development are other areas in which Angola needs international support. The United States is committed to providing over \$90 million in assistance this year. We call upon other Member States to make a substantial commitment.

As this peace process matures, we continue to be concerned by persistent reports of Angolan involvement in the conflict in Zaire. Further destabilization of Zaire is not in Africa's interest. We call upon all Angolans to put an immediate halt to such actions and to give their full support to the international effort led by the United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Representative, Mr. Sahnoun, to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict on the basis of the United Nations five-point peace plan.

Finally, the United States would like to recognize the unflagging work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye, in bringing about the formation of the unity Government. We wish the unity Government full success in completing all the tasks agreed to in the Lusaka Protocol and in establishing a firm foundation for Angolan peace and prosperity.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list. The next meeting of the Council to continue consideration of the item on its agenda will take place this afternoon at 3.30.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.